



INTERNAL USER GUIDE

How to Complete and Submit Electronic Applications for Funding with the National Institutes of Health

Applying and Finding Funding within the NIH Guide and Downloading the Application Package

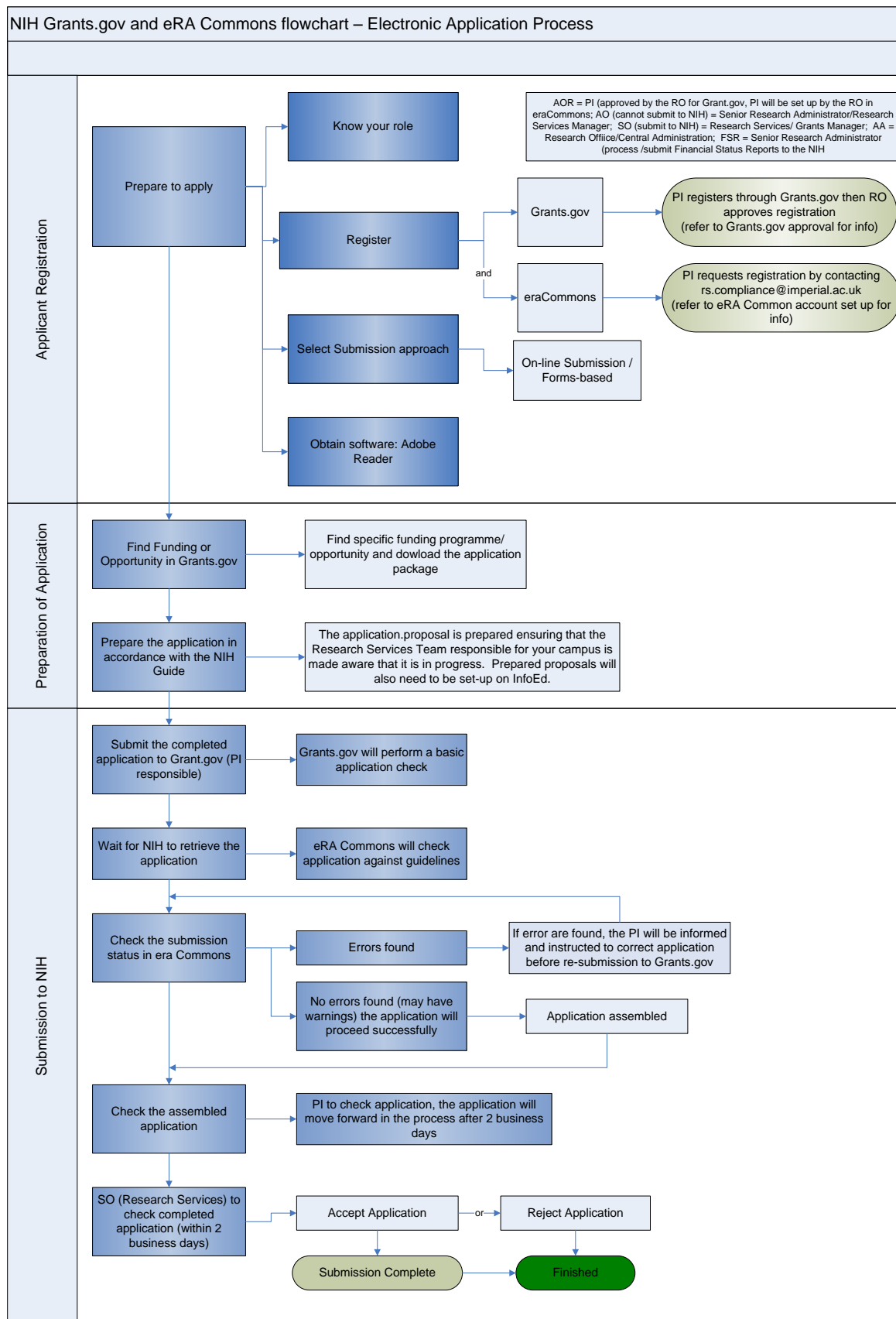


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Flowchart overview of the NIH Application Process



Important Pre-Requisite Information:

- As this is a fairly complex application system we strongly suggest that you allow plenty of time to complete your application. The actual process of creating, validating and submitting the application online typically takes considerably longer than other electronic systems.
- We request that you contact your Faculty Research Services/Joint Research Office team as early as possible so that they can assist you through the process.
- Grants.gov may take up to two days to process an application and eRA Commons may take one day, therefore all applications to the NIH should be **emailed to your Faculty Research Services/Joint Research Office teams FIVE WORKING DAYS in advance of the deadline** to allow for checking and the possibility of re-submission.
- The vast majority of NIH applications where we are applying direct to the Funding Agency must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov and the eRA Commons online systems; however as the application process is a complex and lengthy one and it is recommended that you allow plenty of time for this.
- PIs need a registered account on eRA Commons, so allow time for this to be created. Also a Grants.gov account is advisable, discuss with the Research Office or visit the Research Support website <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/researchsupport/funderinformation/online submissions systems#nih>
- The NIH requires a variety of different US reference numbers to be entered on the application. Imperial College reference numbers are as follows:
 - **DUNS Number** (*Data Universal Numbering System*): **227092590**
 - **Animal Welfare Assurance Number** (*OLAW – Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare*): **A5634-01**
 - **Human Subject Assurance Number** (*FWA – Federal Wide Assurance*): **FWA00003281**
 - **Employer Identification Number** (*EIN*) : **1900216839A1**

Narrative Overview of the NIH Application Process

NB. A good summary of the electronic submission process for NIH grant applications can be found at:

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp

- i) Applicants download the Adobe application form and application instructions from grants.gov to their own computer, and complete the application offline. The final application form and attachments should be sent to your department/research services for review. The department will then forward on the application plus any supporting documentation on to Research Services, who will check and submit the application on Grants.gov.
- ii) Please note that if more than one computer is used to view or work on an Adobe application form, each computer must be running the **same version** of Adobe Reader. Using incompatible versions will result in the application becoming corrupt, even if it is not saved.
- iii) Once submitted to Grants.gov the application undergoes two validation checks; one by Grants.gov and the second, more detailed check, by the NIH funding agency. If the application has been successfully validated, the PI and Research Services will be notified by e-mail (via the Imperial College Research Support Mailbox rs.compliance@imperial.ac.uk). If the validation process has failed the application will be rejected. All errors must be corrected before the application can be re-submitted.
- iv) The validation system will also highlight any warnings on the application. Warnings will not stop the application being submitted to the funding agency but they will have to rectify before the grant will be signed off by the funding agency.
- v) If the application needs to be re-submitted due to errors, the submission process has to start again by correcting the application offline, routing it via email to the department and then Research Services, before submitting via Grants.gov and then being electronically routed to the NIH's eRA Commons. Please note that this will still have to be completed well before the submission deadline date.
- vi) The eRA Commons also allows PI's to review the status of all their grant applications and detailed information associated with them. In addition the system allows reviewers to submit critiques and preliminary scores for applications they are reviewing.
- vii) Grants.gov may take up to two days to process an application and eRA Commons may take one day, therefore all applications to the NIH should be **emailed to Research Services FIVE WORKING DAYS in advance of the deadline** to allow for checking and the possibility of re-submission.

Step by step guide

- **Step 1 - create a user account**
- **Step 2 - install correct software**
- **Step 3 - download application forms**
- **Step 4 - complete the application offline**
- **Step 5 - email the application for approval**
- **Step 6 - email the costing to Research Services**
- **Step 7 - Research Services checks the application**
- **Step 8 - application is re-checked and submitted by Research Services**
- **Step 9 - electronic routing of application**
- **Step 10 - notification that application is available for checking on eRA Commons**

Step 1 - create a user account

Anyone intending to submit an application to the NIH will **first require an eRA Commons User Account**, as the details of this account will need to be added to the application. The Principal Investigator will also need this account to view any Errors/Warnings associated with their application once it has been validated and prior to final submission, and to check scores assigned to applications already submitted.

Please contact the Research Office (rs.compliance@imperial.ac.uk) to request the creation of an eRA Commons User Account.

Please supply the following information:

- Full Name
- Email address for notifications
- Birth date (MM/DD/YYYY)

Once a user account has been created the PI will receive a system generated email informing them of their username and a temporary password. The PI should then log in to eRA Commons and change the password as soon as possible

-----Original Message-----
From: commons@od.nih.gov [mailto:commons@od.nih.gov]
Sent: 20 March 2009 15:25
To: Robinson, Gregory A
Subject: eRA Commons: An account has been created for GREGAROBINSON

An NIH eRA Commons account has been created for you with the user ID: GREGAROBINSON. Your role is that of a(n) PI. This role provides your account with a certain level of access to the NIH eRA Commons.

Shortly, you will be receiving another email containing your password. Your account was created on 03/20/2009 11:25:21 by Cindy Lai. If you have any questions about the creation of this account or level of access, contact the person who created the account at: rs.compliance@imperial.ac.uk, +44-(0)20-75947206.

If you have any questions about this email, please contact Cindy Lai at rs.compliance@imperial.ac.uk, who initiated this action.

If you have any questions about this email, please contact the eRA Help Desk at our preferred method of contact <http://ithelpdesk.nih.gov/eRA/> or call 1-866-584-9552 (tty: 301-451-5939) or commons@od.nih.gov <<mailto:commons@od.nih.gov>>.

Please access the NIH Commons at <https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/>

Step 2 - install correct software

The Principal Investigator and everyone viewing or working on the application must ensure that they have the **same** version the of **Adobe Reader** software installed. The most recent version can be downloaded for free of charge from http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp

You may receive a validation error if you are using a different version of Adobe Reader. To prevent a validation error, it is now recommended you uninstall any earlier versions of Adobe Reader and install the latest compatible version of Adobe Reader.

Step 3 - download application forms

The Principal Investigator should locate the funding opportunity they wish to apply for on the grants.gov website: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/find_grant_opportunities.jsp

If you do not know the specific Funding Opportunity Number (FON) or Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, you can search for a funding opportunity by either selecting one of the following options: (i) [Browse by Category](#) (ii) [Browse by Agency](#), (iii) [Advanced Search](#) (iv) [Find Recovery Act Opportunities](#) (see below):

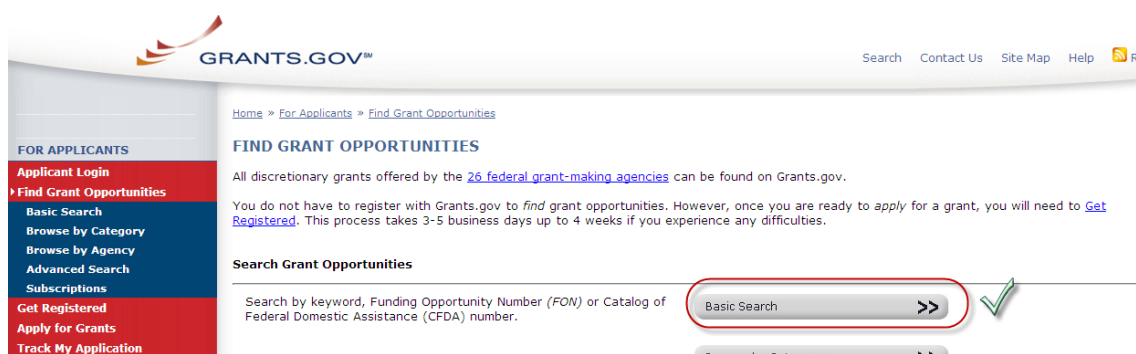
National Institutes of Health – Electronic Submission of Applications



Once you have found the grant opportunity for which you wish to apply click the "Application" button in the grant opportunity synopsis. This page contains links to the page on Grants.gov where the Adobe application forms and instructions can be downloaded.

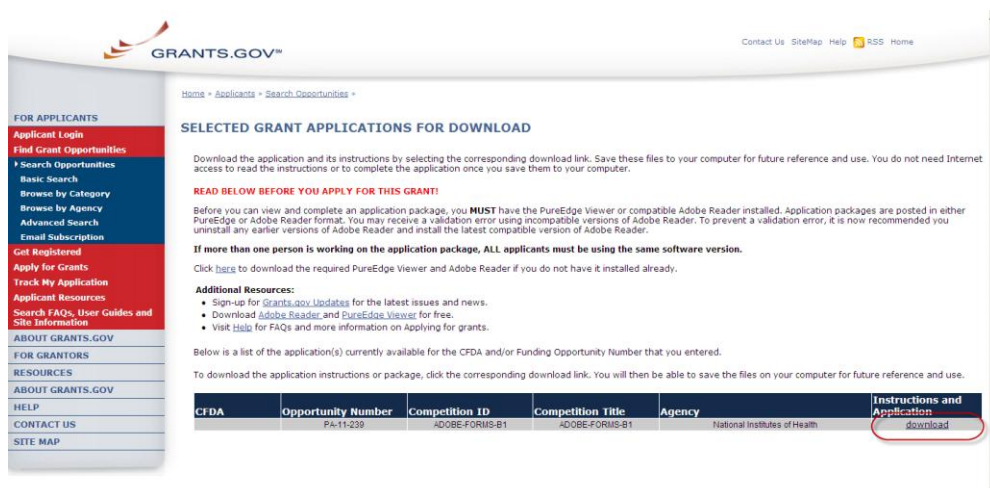
It is important to check the instructions for completing each application carefully, noting any page limits or restrictions on attachments.

Alternatively, if the Funding Opportunity Number (FON; e.g. PA-07-100, RFA-HL-07-004) or the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number (CFDA; e.g. 93.393) are known the PI can go to direct to [Application page](#) to find and download the application form and instruction.



Once you have found your opportunity you will be directed to the Selected Grant Application page where you will see a list of the application(s) currently available for the CFDA and/or Funding Opportunity Number that you entered.


To download the application instructions or package, click the corresponding download link. You will then be able to save the files on your computer for future reference and use.



Step 4 - complete the application offline

The PI should complete the required information in the application form using Adobe Reader. This is an **offline** application.

You will need to add the College's DUNS number to the application. The number is **227092590**.

<input type="button" value="Save & Submit"/> <input type="button" value="Save"/> <input type="button" value="Print"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/> <input type="button" value="Check Package for Errors"/>	
 <div style="float: right; text-align: right;"> <h3>Grant Application Package</h3> </div>	
Opportunity Title: Offering Agency: CFDA Number: CFDA Description: Opportunity Number: Competition ID: Opportunity Open Date: Opportunity Close Date: Agency Contact:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Spatial Uncertainty: Data, Modeling, and Communication National Institutes of Health PA-11-239 ADOBE-FORMS-B1 09/16/2011 09/07/2014 Grants Info Grants Information E-mail: GrantsInfo@nih.gov Phone: 301-435-0714 </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p>This electronic grants application is intended to be used to apply for the specific Federal funding opportunity referenced here.</p> <p>If the Federal funding opportunity listed is not the opportunity for which you want to apply, close this application package by clicking on the "Cancel" button at the top of this screen. You will then need to locate the correct Federal funding opportunity, download its application and then apply.</p> </div>
<p>This opportunity is only open to organizations, applicants who are submitting grant applications on behalf of a company, state, local or tribal government, academia, or other type of organization.</p>	

The PI is also **required to add their eRA Commons Username to the credential field** on the Research & Related Senior/Key Person field. This field is located in the first section called "Profile - Project Director/Principal Investigator".

N.B. The omission of this is one of the most common errors made by applicants. The field is not marked by Grants.gov as required on the application form, but is required by NIH as indicated in the application instructions.

RESEARCH & RELATED Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	
PROFILE - Project Director/Principal Investigator	
Prefix: <input type="text"/>	* First Name: <input type="text"/> Middle Name: <input type="text"/>
* Last Name: <input type="text"/>	Suffix: <input type="text"/>
Position/Title: <input type="text"/>	Department: <input type="text"/>
Organization Name: <input type="text"/>	Division: <input type="text"/>
* Street1: <input type="text"/>	
Street2: <input type="text"/>	
* City: <input type="text"/>	County/ Parish: <input type="text"/>
* State: <input type="text"/>	Province: <input type="text"/>
* Country: <input type="text" value="USA: UNITED STATES"/>	* Zip / Postal Code: <input type="text"/>
* Phone Number: <input type="text"/>	Fax Number: <input type="text"/>
* E-Mail: <input type="text"/>	
Credential, e.g., agency login: <input type="text"/>	<small>eRA Commons user name goes here</small>
* Project Role: <input type="text" value="PD/PI"/>	Other Project Role Category: <input type="text"/>
Degree Type: <input type="text"/>	

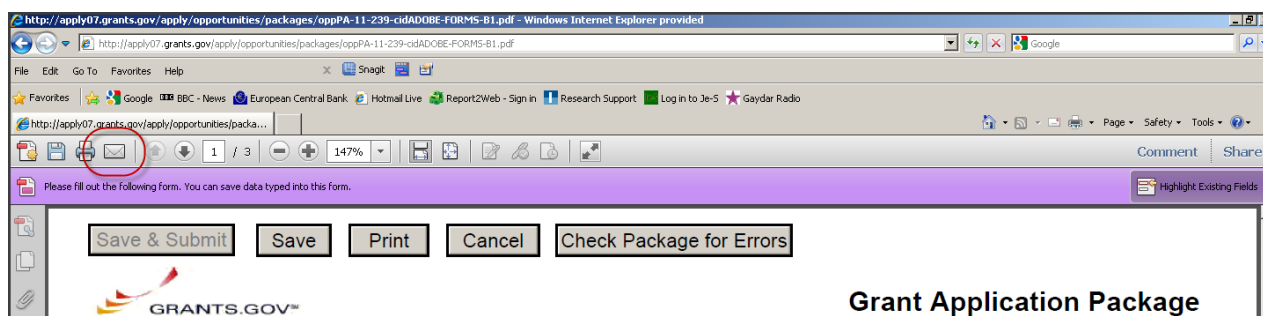
Carefully read the announcement. Application packages are opportunity-specific (i.e. you cannot use an application completed for one opportunity to apply for another), so be sure you have chosen the correct Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) before you download and complete the application package. A button added to the NIH FOA allows you to access the Grants.gov application package directly from the NIH FOA.

Please note copying and pasting data into a Grants.gov application form from MSWord may lead to errors in the Adobe Reader form, unless the information is copied and pasted from a text editor such as "Notepad" which does not have proprietary fonts and characters.

There are various web pages giving instruction on the preparation of applications, these can be found here http://era.nih.gov/ElectronicReceipt/prepare_app.htm

Step 5 - email the application for approval

Once the PI is satisfied that the application is correct and complete, it should be **emailed to the Research Services for approval a minimum of FIVE WORKING DAYS in advance of the deadline**. Select the Envelope option to email it to your Faculty Research Services/Joint Research Office team.



Step 6 – submit the InfoEd costing and attach any attachments

The InfoEd proposal and any relevant attachments need to be submitted **a minimum of FIVE WORKING DAYS** in advance of the deadline.

Step 7 - Research Services checks the application

Once the InfoEd costing and any attachments have been received, Research Services will check the application within five working days (allowing for up to two working days for the application to be routed via grants.gov and eRA Commons).

Research Services will notify the PI/Department of any amendments that are needed. The PI/Department must make any amendments to the application offline and then email the revised version of the application to Research Services. The InfoEd record will also need to be amended and re-submitted.

Step 8 - application is submitted by the PI

Once Research Services have checked the application the PI needs to submit the final application to Grants.gov.

Step 9 - electronic routing of application

Once submitted the application is routed electronically from Grants.gov to the NIH's eRA Commons for validation.

N.B. Please note that the **NIH application deadline applies to when the application reaches the NIH and NOT Grants.gov**. It can take up to **three days for the application to be submitted through both systems** (Grants.gov may take up to two days to process an application and eRA Commons may take one day).

Step 10 - notification that application is available for checking on eRA Commons

The PI and the Imperial College Research Office Mailbox (rs.compliance@imperial.ac.uk) will receive an email informing them that the application is available on eRA Commons for checking and of any warnings or errors on the application. If the application needs to be re-submitted the whole process has to be started again by correcting the application offline, routing it via email to the department and then Research Services, before submitting via Grants.gov and then being electronically routed to the NIH's eRA Commons.

Checking the assembled application is the role of the Authorised Organisation Representative (AOR) / Signing Official (SO). At Imperial College, the Faculty Research Services Managers and Senior Research Administrators are the designated AORs / SOs.

NOTE for Research Services - guidance notes on checking assembled applications may be found on the <https://share.imperial.ac.uk/services/RO/Documents/NIH%20-%20Checking%20and%20Submitting%20Assembled%20Applications.pdf>
Reference **G51 NIH Checking and Submitting Assembled Application**.

Avoiding Common Errors

a) Common Errors

There are detailed instruction and help pages on the eRA Commons website to help applicants to avoid common errors which may lead to an application needing to be corrected.

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/avoiding_errors.htm#6

b) Preparing Text Attachments

- NIH will accept attachments in PDF format only. Do not submit attachments in other formats such as Microsoft Word - **this is one of the most common errors made by applicants**
- do not put special characters in filenames
- disable all security features in the PDF document
- do not submit documents with editable fields (fields that can be changed)

Helpdesk

For **Further Information or Help** please use the following link

http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp and select the User Guides or see below

- **Grants.gov Contact Center:**
 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are closed on [federal holidays](#).
 - Phone: 1-800-518-4726 (local toll free). For International callers, please dial 606-545-5035 to speak with a Contact Center representative.
 - Email: support@grants.gov
 - **iPortal:** Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET).
- Please have the following information available when contacting us, to help expedite your inquiry:** Funding Opportunity Number (FON), Name of Agency, Specific Area of Concern.
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Mail Address:**
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Grants.gov
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

Federal User Login [Here](#)

eRA Commons Help Desk

Hours: Mon-Fri, 7AM-8PM EDT/EST

Web: <http://itservicedesk.nih.gov/eRA/>

Toll-free: 866-504-9552

Phone: 301-402-7469

TTY: 301-451-5939

Contact initiated outside of business hours via Web or voice mail will be returned the next business day.